



About the NCA

Our Mission:

The NCA Commission on Schools is a dynamic school accreditation and evaluation organization that protects the public trust and is proactive in promoting a system of education that:

- *Enhances student learning and love for learning.*
- *Fosters healthy, creative, and innovative human beings.*
- *Prepares students to live and learn in an ever changing and diverse world.*
- *Provides standards and evaluation services for schools that ensure successful schooling transitions for its students.*

NCA accredits over 8000 schools divided up into 7 categories: Elementary, Middle, Secondary, College Preparatory, Vocational/Adult, Optional/Special Function, and Unit (K-12). Those 8000 schools are spread out over 19 states and also include the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools overseas. At its heart, NCA is an accreditation and evaluation organization. To become a member of NCA, a school must meet NCA's standards, conduct a self-study, and adopt a model of continuous school improvement (also known as seeking an endorsement) that focuses on improving student performance. You can find more details about this process in our [Guide for Parents](#).

NCA strongly believes that NCA standards and their application will enhance learning, but there are other benefits to membership. NCA membership

- Helps schools to focus on improving student performance
- Increases the effectiveness of the school improvement process
- Provides school recognition that is useful in the college admissions process
- Promotes staff development
- Involves schools as partners in the formation of regional standards
- Provides a framework for accountability
- Assists the school by promoting essential school conditions such as programs, services, staffing, finances, and instructional resources.

Finally, NCA membership protects the public's trust. Schools that are NCA members have been examined by an outside team made up of their peers, and have had their school improvement plan reviewed by experts.

While accreditation and evaluation are the biggest parts of NCA, we also conduct staff development opportunities through our [Annual Meeting](#), held every year in downtown Chicago, and through our Improving Student Performance [level 1](#) and [level 2](#) workshops, held throughout our region.

Questions about NCA can be directed to the [Webmaster](#), or you may find more detailed contact information on our [How to Contact Us](#) page.

NCA also produces a tri-fold brochure and a 5 minute video that give a concise overview of the organization. More information about these materials is available in our online [Publications Catalog](#).

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The North Central Association covers 19 states in the central part of the U. S. We maintain an office in each state where we accredit schools. Contact information (both phone, U. S. mail and email) for those offices can be viewed by clicking on the state below. If you have a question about a specific accredited school it is probably best to contact the office in the state where the school is located.

Questions about NCA can also be directed to the Commission on Schools office at nca@nca.asu.edu or you may call us at 800/525-9517 or 602/965-8700.

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AN OVERVIEW

OPTIONAL AND SPECIAL FUNCTION SCHOOLS

Vision, Mission, Beliefs

This booklet begins with a statement of vision, mission, and basic supporting beliefs of NCA. These statements were developed and adopted in strategic planning sessions in 1993 and 1994.

NCA Standard

NCA's standard--to maximize the proportion of promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful school-to-school or school-to-work transitions--is a single overriding commitment to excellence. The achievement of the standard is supported by specific "membership" criteria.

Accreditation Endorsements

After achieving "initial membership," the school must begin an improvement cycle and pursue one of three endorsements—school improvement, outcomes, or transitions. In addition, a "district recognition" is available to districts meeting certain criteria.

In many aspects, the three endorsements are similar; however, there are differences. In the school improvement endorsement, a majority of the goals must focus on improved student learning (some may focus on organizational aspects of the school) and the peer review team visits once. In the outcomes endorsement, all targeted goals must focus on improved student performance, the peer review team (or the chairperson) visits the school three to five times, and regional review of the goals and the documentation is required. For the transitions endorsement, some goals are prescribed by NCA, there are multiple peer review team visits, regional review is required, and the school must demonstrate an increase in the proportion of promoted or graduated students who are prepared to be successful in the next transition.

Membership Criteria

There are five major criteria that specify those policies, procedures, and resources needed by a school to qualify for membership and to initiate and sustain an improvement process. The five criteria are:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Information System (IS)
- Process of Schooling (PS)
- Vision, Leadership-Governance, and School Community (VL)
- Resources and Allocation (RA)

The membership criteria are those requirements considered to be essential to the function of a school and are required to be met by all member schools. The school will be asked to attest to the fulfillment of these membership criteria on an annual basis, perhaps by annual report as in the past.

District Recognition

NCA accredits school-by-school; however, if all schools in a district are NCA members, district

recognition is available. NCA's district recognition requires that the district adopt a continuous and coordinated K-12 school improvement process that includes the following:

1. The board of education, working with and through the school staff, parents, and community at large, establishes an overall vision for education in the community, identifies district-wide goals to advance that vision, and establishes an accountability system to document and monitor achievement of those goals.
2. The district establishes a district improvement committee whose members are drawn from the individual building steering committees. A district coordinator is selected to oversee school improvement efforts.
3. Each school has improvement goals which complement the district focus and goals.
4. There is continuity among elementary, middle level, and high school improvement efforts. These efforts involve collaborative planning among the three levels.
5. An external team visits the district at least once in every five years to monitor the district goals, the attainment of the goals, and the functioning of the district committee.

Definition of Schools Qualifying Under These Criteria

An optional school is one that offers students an alternative to the standard elementary or secondary school program. It may be either a public or a nonpublic school. A school designed to meet the educational needs of a particular group of students under very special circumstances also falls under these criteria as a special function school.

An optional school must offer a complete educational program for the students it serves. However, a special function school offering only a partial program may be accredited under these criteria if its particular offerings constitute an integral part of the student's regular elementary or secondary school program, with the remainder of the program being completed elsewhere.

A special function school seeking accreditation under these criteria must specify clearly the special function or unusual circumstances that enjoin a special program for the school. Its students must be selected on the basis of the school's expressed special function and the supporting program for the particular needs of those students.

Public schools established to serve all students within defined attendance areas, college preparatory schools, general program non-public schools, vocational/occupational secondary schools, and adult schools may not qualify under these standards. Alternative educational programs offered within or through a standard school may not be accredited under these standards since those programs would be covered by the accreditation of the encompassing school.

The school must comply with the established criteria wherever they are applicable to its operation. If the school believes a criterion does not apply to its particular situation, it must explain fully its rationale for that exclusion. The rationale will be subject to the review and approval of the Commission on Schools.

The Commission on Schools shall make the final determination of the eligibility of a school to apply for accreditation under these standards.

NCA STANDARD

Each member school shall maximize the proportion of its promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful transitions from school-to-school or school-to-work.

The school's pursuit and attainment of the standard will be accomplished by (1) meeting the

membership criteria and (2) engaging in continuous school improvement by pursuing one of the accreditation endorsements.

Membership

Initial: The school meets membership criteria and agrees to pursue one of the endorsement options.

Continuing: The school continues to meet the membership criteria and demonstrates its progress through the phases of the chosen endorsement.

Accreditation Endorsements

In challenging schools to be ready for all learners, NCA requires its members to focus on improving student performance by utilizing NCA's endorsements. The school chooses one of three endorsement options which represents the school's current commitment to an improvement process designed to enhance learning for all students. All endorsements share a *COMMON PROCESS THAT INCLUDES PLANNING, INTERNAL ANALYSIS, EXTERNAL REVIEW, IMPLEMENTATION, AND DOCUMENTATION*. The endorsements described below are of equal status and provide flexibility in meeting school and student needs.

In addition a district may choose to be recognized for pursuing a coordinated and articulated district-wide focus on student performance. In the K-12 improvement process all schools may seek the same endorsement or each may seek a different endorsement.

School Improvement Endorsement

The school declares its intent to pursue a "school improvement" endorsement. In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

- Develops a student profile and mission statement.
- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals (the majority of which focus on student learning).
- Submits selected goals to state office for review and approval.
- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts at least one visit by an external peer review team.
- Implements the school improvement plan.
- Documents goal attainment.
- Submits a three year progress report to the state office.

Outcomes Endorsement

The school declares its intent to pursue an "outcomes endorsement." In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

- Develops a student profile and mission statement.
- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals that focus exclusively on student learning.
- Submits selected goals to state office for review and approval.
- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts at least three visits by an external peer review team.
- Implements the school improvement plan.
- Documents goal attainment and provides evidence of student success to the peer review team.

Transitions Endorsement

The school declares its intent to pursue a "transitions endorsement." In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

- Develops a student profile and mission statement.
- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals that include prescribed transition goals.
- Submits selected goals to state office for review and approval.
- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts multiple visits by an external peer review team.
- Implements the school improvement plan.
- Documents goal attainment using NCA approved measures and provides evidence of student success to the peer review team.

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Vision

The North Central Association challenges schools to be ready for all learners and to press them to excellence.

Mission

NCA is a dynamic school accreditation and evaluation organization that protects the public trust and is proactive in promoting a system of education that:

- Enhances student learning and the love of learning.
- Fosters healthy, creative, and innovative human beings.
- Prepares students to live and learn in an ever changing and diverse world.
- Ensures successful schooling transitions for its learners through the provision of standards and evaluation services for schools.

Beliefs

Student success, especially emphasizing improving student performance, represents the unifying theme of the organization's beliefs.

6. We believe that NCA standards and their application will enhance learning.
7. We believe that children are our greatest resource, and it takes the entire community to provide the highest quality education for them.
8. We believe that through the leadership of NCA schools will continuously improve.
9. We believe that the recognition and valuing of diversity and equity are essential for student success.
10. We believe that the quality of students' school experience is ultimately measured by her/his successful school-to-school (prekindergarten to postsecondary) and school-to-work transitions and by the creation of a desire for lifelong learning.

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AN OVERVIEW

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE LEVEL, SECONDARY AND UNIT SCHOOLS

Vision, Mission, Beliefs

This booklet begins with a statement of vision, mission, and basic supporting beliefs of NCA. These statements were developed and adopted in strategic planning sessions in 1993 and 1994.

NCA Standard

NCA's standard--to maximize the proportion of promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful school-to-school or school-to-work transitions--is a single overriding commitment to excellence. The achievement of the standard is supported by specific "membership" and "improvement" requirements entitled "criteria" (see below).

Accreditation Endorsements

After achieving "initial membership," the school must begin an improvement cycle and pursue one of three endorsements—school improvement, outcomes, or transitions. In addition, a "district recognition" is available to districts meeting certain criteria.

In many aspects, the three endorsements are similar; however, there are differences. In the school improvement endorsement, a majority of the goals must focus on improved student learning (some may focus on organizational aspects of the school) and the peer review team visits once. In the outcomes endorsement, all targeted goals must focus on improved student performance, the peer review team (or the chairperson) visits the school three to five times, and regional review of the goals and the documentation is required. For the transitions endorsement, some goals are prescribed by NCA, there are multiple peer review team visits, regional review is required, and the school must demonstrate an increase in the proportion of promoted or graduated students who are prepared to be successful in the next transition.

Membership and Improvement Criteria

There are five major criteria that specify those policies, procedures, and resources needed by a school to qualify for membership and to initiate and sustain an improvement process. The five criteria are:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
 - Information System (IS)
 - Process of Schooling (PS)
 - Vision, Leadership-Governance, and School Community (VL)
 - Resources and Allocation (RA)

Under each of these five categories there are two types of criteria: membership and improvement. They are defined below.

The **membership criteria** are those requirements considered to be essential to the function of a school and are required to be met by all member schools. The school will be asked to attest to the fulfillment

of these membership criteria on an annual basis, perhaps by annual report as in the past.

The **improvement criteria** are statements of exemplary practice and are considered necessary for a school to initiate and sustain a program improvement effort focusing on improved student performance. They are intended to promote continuous growth in each member school. Thus, as the school analyzes its improvement needs, the extent to which it has achieved the intent of the improvement criteria is an important component. Each school should strive to improve its attainment of the improvement criteria at the exemplary level. Schools will vary in terms of implementation of the improvement criteria; no violations will be cited if a school indicates it is at the "entry level" regarding the improvement criteria. The focus is on helping schools move from an entry level to an exemplary level over time.

District Recognition

NCA accredits school-by-school; however, if all schools in a district are NCA members, district recognition is available. NCA's district recognition requires that the district adopt a continuous and coordinated K-12 school improvement process that includes the following:

11. The board of education, working with and through the school staff, parents, and community at large, establishes an overall vision for education in the community, identifies district-wide goals to advance that vision, and establishes an accountability system to document and monitor achievement of those goals.
12. The district establishes a district improvement committee whose members are drawn from the individual building steering committees. A district coordinator is selected to oversee school improvement efforts.
13. Each school has improvement goals which complement the district focus and goals.
14. There is continuity among elementary, middle level, and high school improvement efforts. These efforts involve collaborative planning among the three levels.
15. An external team visits the district at least once in every five years to monitor the district goals, the attainment of the goals, and the functioning of the district committee.

Definition of a Unit School

A unit school provides a sequence of organized learning experiences for children encompassing grades kindergarten through twelve. Under special circumstances, a school with a grade organization continuing through grade 9, 10, or 11 but not through grade 12 may be considered a unit school at the discretion of the State Committee. The school shall have a common identity for all grades (as determined by the State Committee) and shall be so organized as to operate as a single entity. The organizational structure of the school is to be determined by the district so as to best facilitate the educational development of its students.

The organizational structure established by the school district will determine the particular policies and standards under which the individual school is eligible for accreditation, provided this is in accord with whatever state classification of school levels exists.

NCA STANDARD

Each member school shall maximize the proportion of its promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful transitions from school-to-school or school-to-work.

The school's pursuit and attainment of the standard will be accomplished by: (1) meeting the membership criteria, (2) meeting the intent of the improvement criteria, and (3) engaging in continuous school improvement by pursuing one of the accreditation endorsements.

Membership

Initial: The school meets membership criteria and agrees to pursue one of the endorsement options.

Continuing: The school meets membership criteria, the intent of the improvement criteria, and pursues one of the endorsement options.

Accreditation Endorsements

In challenging schools to be ready for all learners, NCA requires its members to focus on improving student performance by utilizing NCA's endorsements. The school chooses one of three endorsement options which represents the school's current commitment to an improvement process designed to enhance learning for all students.

All endorsements share a *COMMON PROCESS THAT INCLUDES PLANNING, INTERNAL ANALYSIS, EXTERNAL REVIEW, IMPLEMENTATION, AND DOCUMENTATION*. The endorsements described below are of equal status and provide flexibility in meeting school and student needs.

In addition a district may choose to be recognized for pursuing a coordinated and articulated districtwide focus on student performance. In the K-12 improvement process all schools may seek the same endorsement or each may seek a different endorsement.

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The school declares its intent to pursue a "school improvement" endorsement. In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

- Develops a student profile and mission statement.
- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals (the majority of which focus on student learning).
- Submits selected goals to state office for review and approval.
- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts at least one visit by an external peer review team.
- Implements the school improvement plan.
- Documents goal attainment.
- Submits a three year progress report to the state office.

Outcomes Endorsement

The school declares its intent to pursue an "outcomes endorsement." In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

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- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals that focus exclusively on student learning.
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- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts at least three visits by an external peer review team.
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- Documents goal attainment and provides evidence of student success to the peer review team.

Transitions Endorsement

The school declares its intent to pursue a "transitions endorsement." In implementing the common school improvement process (identified above) the school:

- Develops a student profile and mission statement.
- Analyzes improvement needs.
- Establishes improvement goals that include prescribed transition goals.
- Submits selected goals to state office for review and approval.
- Develops a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP).
- Hosts multiple visits by an external peer review team.
- Implements the school improvement plan.
- Documents goal attainment using NCA approved measures and provides evidence of student success to the peer review team.

APPENDIX B

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POLICIES OF THE COMMISSION

The purposes of the Commission on Schools are to develop and maintain the standard and criteria for accreditation which ensure the preconditions for quality education and to foster school improvement. Below are the Commission's policies to be followed in the accrediting of schools.

POLICY I: ACCREDITATION

A school shall be accredited on the basis of its meeting the policies, standard, and criteria of the Commission on Schools. The Commission recognizes that unique circumstances of individual schools may result in accreditation with a deviation noted.

POLICY II: PERIOD OF ACCREDITATION

A school is accredited for one year at a time, which is always the current school year. However, its certificate of membership is valid as long as the school continues to satisfy the conditions for accreditation established by the Commission and is fully approved or accredited by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting agency in the state. If a state accrediting agency uses a multiple classification, a school must qualify for the class designated by the state committee as appropriate in that state.

A school that has withdrawn, been discontinued, or is dropped during the Annual meeting has its accreditation officially terminated. When a school loses its approval or accreditation by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting agency within the state, it becomes subject to the usual accredited-warned and dropped procedures.

POLICY III: CATEGORIES OF SCHOOL STATUS

The accreditation status of member schools shall be reviewed annually. Based upon an analysis of its annual report, on which all violations of policies or criteria must be cited, and such additional information as the Commission may require, a member school shall be classified in one of the following categories each spring at the Annual meeting:

16. **Accredited.** A school shall be classified as Accredited when it meets the requirements of all policies and criteria or when, in the opinion of the Commission, it fails to meet one or more of the policies or criteria and the resulting deficiency does not detract to a serious degree from the quality of the school's educational program.
17. **Accredited-Warned.** A school shall be classified as Accredited-Warned when in the judgment of the Commission:
 - a. It fails to meet one or more of the policies or criteria and the resulting deficiency seriously detracts from the quality of the school's educational program,

- b. It consistently fails to remove or make substantial progress towards removing all deficiencies noted the previous year,
- c. It consistently violates policies or criteria, or
- d. It deliberately and unnecessarily violates one or more of the policies or criteria.

The period of warning is for one academic year. If by the next Annual meeting the cause for warning has not been corrected, the school will be dropped from membership in the Association, except under extraordinary circumstances when a second warning may be given. A state committee may recommend a school for second warning only after receipt of written documentation from the school, including endorsement by the superintendent, attesting to the fact that it is the intent of the school to remove the cause for warning prior to the next Annual Meeting. A second warning may be given only by means of a three-fourths vote of members of the Commission present at the Annual meeting.

When all schools within the district are warned for a violation beyond the control of the individual school, such as the deterioration of board/staff relationships, the warning shall not become additive as far as the individual school is concerned. However, only under the most extenuating circumstances will a second warning be granted for a district-wide violation.

18. **Withdrawn or Discontinued.** A school which voluntarily requests to withdraw or is discontinued will be classified as "Withdrawn" or "Discontinued" for the records of the Association. A written request approved by the school's governing board shall be made to the state office at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting.
19. **Dropped.** A school which finds it impossible to meet the policies or criteria or refuses to do so in successive years may be dropped from membership. A school shall not be dropped without a one-year warning if it has been accredited continuously for five years, except by a three-fourths vote of the members of the Commission present at the Annual meeting.
20. **Candidacy Status.** A school making initial application for membership but as yet unable to meet fully the policies and criteria for accreditation may seek candidacy status for a period up to three years. Candidacy status is not equivalent to accreditation. Candidacy status schools will be listed separately in the NCA Quarterly. Candidacy status entitles the school to participate in all NCA open affairs and functions but does not entitle the school to a vote. The following conditions must be met for candidacy status:
 - a. The state committee helps the school ascertain which of the criteria for accreditation it currently is unable to reach, and the school develops a plan for correcting those deficiencies within the period covered by the candidacy status.
 - b. A formal agreement is reached between the school board and the state committee to maintain candidacy status up to a limit of three years.
 - c. The school submits an annual progress report to the state committee. It is continued in candidacy status on the basis of that report, as recommended by the state committee and confirmed by the reviewing process at the Annual meeting.
 - d. The school fulfills whatever other specific requirements for candidacy status are established by the Commission on Schools.
 - e. The school pays full dues for each year it remains in candidacy status.
 - f. The school applies for and is granted accreditation sometime during these three years.

If the school has not attained membership by the third annual meeting following its placement on candidacy status, the status shall be terminated.

POLICY IV: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Each school shall conduct a continuous improvement process that focuses on enhanced learning for all students. The following expectations shall be met:

PEER REVIEW SCHEDULE

1. The date for the peer review visit will be established jointly by the school, the chairperson, and the state office.
2. The Commission's evaluation cycle is once in every five years. [However, we recognize that some of our members affiliate with other organizations (such as ISACS), and there is a need to modify the evaluation cycle to accommodate these situations. At no time will the evaluation cycle exceed once in every seven years.]

PEER REVIEW TEAMS

3. The minimum time for the on-site visitation for schools pursuing the school improvement endorsement shall be two full days, exclusive of the teams' organizational meeting, team conference time, socializing activities, and follow-up.
4. The minimum size for a peer review team shall be five members plus the chairperson.
5. Members of the visiting team shall be selected by the state director or other designated person with the concurrence of the principal.
6. The majority of the members of the visiting team shall generally be classroom teachers and administrators who are presently working in schools.
7. In general, professionals from the local school district shall not be used on the visiting team. At least 75% of the members of the visiting team must be from outside the local district.

CHAIRPERSONS OF PEER REVIEW TEAMS

8. The entire organization, control, and direction of the visiting team shall be the responsibility of the visiting team chairperson at all times, unless the state director assumes the responsibility.
9. No persons shall serve as a chairperson of a visiting team unless they have participated in a training session for the task or have had successful prior experience as a chairperson.
10. No professional employed by or retired from the local district in which the school is located shall serve as a chairperson for the visiting team.

REPORTS OF PEER REVIEW TEAMS

11. The peer review team shall prepare a written report of the visit following the format required by the state office. The written report shall be filed according to State Committee guidelines in a timely fashion.
12. Each report shall include a title page that contains the following information: name and address of school, dates of visit, principal name, visiting team chairperson name, distribution of copies.
13. A disclaimer page shall to be included in all NCA peer review team reports. The disclaimer shall not be altered.

14. An oral exit report is presented at the close of the team visit. Prior to the exit report, the team chair informs the school administrator of the major recommendations to be identified during the exit report.
15. Prior to the completion of the visitation, all sections of the team report are submitted to the full team for review, amendment, and final adoption. Following this agreement and action by the team, no substantive changes are made in the content of the written report submitted to the school.

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

16. Within one year of receipt of the visiting team's report, the school develops and has on file with the state NCA office a comprehensive school improvement plan.
17. A representative of the state office (e.g., the chairperson of the team, an associate team member, the state director, the assistant state director, a State Committee member) may return to the school within a year for a follow-up visit to review the comprehensive school improvement plan and its implementation. The NCA representative files a written report that addresses the school's implementation of the improvement plan with the state office.
18. The school continually reviews and, if appropriate, modifies the school improvement plan to ensure success for all students.

POLICY V: ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS AND PROGRAMS TO MEET POLICIES AND CRITERIA

A school or school system may prefer to develop formats and approaches that differ substantially from one or more of the accreditation criteria of the Commission on Schools. The intent of this policy is to encourage these developments under controlled conditions. Approval for such formats and approaches shall be sought annually from the state committee. Such variance will be considered and may be approved only when the following conditions are met:

1. The plans for alternative designs and programs are submitted in writing.
2. The purposes and objectives with accompanying activities and procedures are stated.
3. An evaluation process which details evaluation criteria for each of the objectives is built into the plan. When the plan extends beyond one year, the state committee shall review on a yearly basis progress towards the accomplishments of the objectives. The review may include on-site monitoring and verification of progress.

POLICY VI: NON-DISCRIMINATORY ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

A school shall not discriminate in its admission of students on the basis of race, ethnic background, sex, or handicap. Nor shall it discriminate on the basis of religion unless the school is officially church-related and wishes to admit students mainly from communicants of that denomination. Schools that have been designed specifically to serve a single sex or that are supported by a state or federal agency to serve a specialized group of students shall not be considered discriminatory.

AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

1. A proposed amendment to any set of standard and criteria for accreditation may be submitted to the state committee, provided six member school principals in that particular category of schools in the state sign the petition specifying the particular amendment.
2. A state committee may, if it so desires, initiate specific amendments of its own.

3. The state committee shall pass the petition of amendments to the executive board at its December meeting accompanied by one of three recommendations:
 - a. Endorsed,
 - b. Not Endorsed,
 - c. On Its Merits (No Recommendation).
4. If a Standards Review Committee has been appointed to represent the schools covered by that particular set of standard and criteria, then the state committee shall transmit the petition of amendment, accompanied by the state committee's recommendation, to that committee. The Standards Review Committee shall consider the proposed amendment and make its own recommendation on it. It then shall transmit the proposed amendment to the executive board at its December meeting, accompanied by one of three recommendations:
 - a. Endorsed,
 - b. Not Endorsed,
 - c. On Its Merits (No Recommendation).
5. The Standards Review Committee may submit proposed amendments of its own to the executive board at its December meeting.
6. At its December meeting, the executive board shall consider each proposed amendment, affixing to it a recommendation of:
 - a. Endorsed,
 - b. Not Endorsed,
 - c. On Its Merits (No Recommendation).
7. The executive board may, if it so desires, initiate specific amendments of its own although not later than its December meeting.
8. After the December meeting, the executive director shall notify each member of the Commission on Schools of the proposed amendments (and the various recommendations accompanying them) that are to be submitted to the Commission on Schools at the forthcoming Annual meeting.
9. The proposed amendments, along with the recommendations of the state committees and the executive board, shall be submitted to the Commission on Schools at its Annual meeting. The Commission may by a simple majority vote take one of five actions:
 - a. Adopt the amendment as submitted.
 - b. Reject the amendment as submitted.
 - c. Amend the proposal, then adopt it as amended.
 - d. Defer action until the next Annual meeting.
 - e. Submit the issue to a referendum vote of the membership.
10. General considerations:
 - a. No amendment to any set of standard and criteria for accreditation may be proposed in a manner other than that described above.

- b. A petition to amend may be withdrawn at any stage of this process by a written revocation signed by a majority of the member principals who signed the original petition.
- c. A proposal for the revision (extensive reformulation) of any set of standard and criteria for accreditation must first be recommended by the executive board, then be submitted to the Commission for final action.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

APPEALS FROM ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Both member and newly applying schools are accorded the right to appear before the state committee or the Commission on Schools to contest any recommendation or decision on its classification for accreditation. The procedures to be followed are:

A. Appeal from the Decision of the state committee

1. At least two weeks prior to the Annual meeting of the Commission on Schools, the school is to be notified in writing of the proposed recommendation for accreditation and the reasons for that recommendation.
2. The school may submit a written request to have its representative(s) appear before the state committee, or a subcommittee thereof authorized to act on behalf of the state committee, to lodge an appeal or to submit additional evidence. The appeal shall state the specific reason for seeking a reversal of the decision. This meeting must be held at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting.
3. A school wishing to contest the state committee's decision beyond this point may make application to the Executive Director of the Commission on Schools no less than 48 hours prior to the session of the Annual meeting at which the accreditation of schools is to be considered, to have its representative(s) appear before the reviewing committee when the status of the school is being considered and subsequently before the Commission at the Annual meeting.

B. Appeal from a Decision of the Commission on Schools

A school may appeal a decision of the Commission on Schools on the basis of alleged departure from established procedures, bias, injustice, misapplication of membership policies and criteria, or for the presentation of additional evidence. The procedures to be followed are:

1. The appeal shall be filed with the executive director of the Commission on Schools not less than 10 nor more than 30 days after the Annual meeting.
2. The appeal shall state specifically the reasons for seeking a reversal of the decision of the Commission.
3. A panel of three impartial educators shall be selected in this manner:
 - a. one by the executive board of the Commission on Schools,
 - b. one by the NCA Board of Directors, and
 - c. one by the state committee.

Efforts shall be made to enlist the services of respected educators who are knowledgeable about NCA requirements but who are not immediately involved in NCA activities in any elected or appointed post at either the state or regional level. The administration of the

appellant school shall have no power to veto the panel members selected.

4. The expenses of the panelists are to be borne fully by the appellant school, but the panelists are not to receive honoraria or fees.
5. The panel must hold a hearing within three weeks of the time the appeal is filed, at which hearing the school may present its case and submit whatever additional information it wishes.
6. The recommendation of the panel is to be submitted to the executive board at its June meeting, at which time the State Director and representatives from the school may be present.
7. The executive board's decision on the matter is reached at that June meeting.
8. If it so decides, the school may then appeal to the NCA Board of Directors, using the procedures outlined below.

APPEALS TO THE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A school/institution may appeal a decision of the Commission on Schools to the Association Board of Directors. The procedures are published as part of the Rules of Procedure of the North Central Association. Included in the document are grounds for appeal, administration of the appeals process, appeals panel, notice of intent to appeal, payment for costs of the appeal, filing of the appeal document, commission response, public response to inquiries, appeals committee, scheduling the appeal hearing, procedure for the hearing, decision of the appeals committee, and written report of the appeals committee. The appeals process is published annually in the summer edition of the NCA Quarterly. You may also telephone the Commission office (800-525-9517) for a copy of the document.

APPEALS FROM EVALUATION DECISIONS

A member school may contest any decision by a state committee or by the executive board relating to its evaluation program. The procedures to be followed are:

1. Following a state committee's adverse decision on an evaluation procedure, the school administrator shall submit to the executive director a written request, supported by documentation, for appeal of the decision. The written request shall state the specific reasons for seeking a reversal of the decision.
2. The executive director shall schedule an executive board review of the appeal at the next meeting of the Executive Board.
3. A school choosing to contest a state committee decision beyond the executive board may make application to the Executive Director of the Commission no less than 48 hours prior to the next session of the Annual meeting of the Commission.

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